A CASE of Conſcience

Concerning *Eating of Blood*, Conſidered and Anſwered.

CConcerning that Caſe of Conſcience, *Whether the Eating of Blood be Lawful?* I find that many not only of the more Ignorant, & Common Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, but ſome very Learned men among them, have Inclined to the Negative in the Queſtion propoſed. So did ſome of the Ancients, particularly *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and the Author of the Queſtions and Anſwers to the Orthodox, which paſſeth under the Name of *Juſtin Martyr*. Like-wiſe *Euſebius* relates, that when St. *Biblis* was put upon the Rack to make her Confeſs, that Chriſtians were wont to Eat Infants (for ſo had the Accuſer of the Brethren made the Heathen Believe) ſhe Replyed, *How ſhould they Eat Children, when they Abſtain from all Eating of Blood?* Alſo, in the Book of Canons falſly pretended to be the Apoſtles, the Sixty Third Canon declares, that *If any one in Holy Orders, Eateth Blood, he ſhall be Degraded, but if he be a Lay man, he ſhall be Excommunicated.* Moreover, ſome Old Councils have condemned it, as Unlawful: And ſome Emperours have by very ſevere Laws, Inhibited all Blood-Eating. The moſt Remarkable is that Ordinance of the Emperour *Leo*, Sirnamed the Philoſopher *A D.* 886. He ſayes, that *He had received Information, that there were ſome, who ſtuffed Blood into Guts, or in Bags, and did Eat*

the same, as usual Meat: He does therefore Command that no Person should dare to Practice himself, or to Sell such things to others; declaring that both Buyer and Seller, shall have all his Goods forfeited, his Head Shaven, and himself sent into Perpetual Banishment. It is further True, that the Christian *Greeks*, the *Russians*, *Abyssines*, *Maronites*, have abstained from the Eating of Blood, as unlawful. Nor are those Christians free from far greater Superstition than this. Some late Authors have Written against it: So *Grotius* and *Curcellæus* in his Treatise *De Usu Sanguinis*; Dr. *Du Veil*, in his Commentary on Acts 15. 29. And Dr. *Barlow*, the late Bishop of *Lyncoln*, whose Arguments in the Opinion of the *Athenian Mercury* (March 24. 1694.) are of such weight, as that *they will make his Antagonist sweat to Answer them.* This notwithstanding, the Generality of Protestant Divines maintain the Affirmative, in the Question under Consideration. So *Pareus*, *Rivet*, *Calvin*, *Willet*, and many others in their Commentaries on *Gen* 9. 4. So *Voetius de Politia Ecclesiastica*, Part 1. Pag. 471. who refers his Reader for Satisfaction in that point, to *Libavius* and *Horn-beck* his *Diatriba de Sanguine & Suffocato*. So among Episcopal Divines, Bishop *Richardson*, and Dr. *Hammond*. Thus also some of the Ancients, *Quadratus* (an old Christian Philosopher who affirms, that in his Time, some of the Persons on whom our Saviour wrought Miraculous Cures were still Living) maintains (as is testified by *Bede*) that there is no Meat from which a Christian ought to abstain. Vid. *Menologium Græcorum*, in Septemb. 21. See *Dupin* Vol. 1. p. 48. But it is not the Practice or Authority of men, without Scripture or Convincing Reason, that can Determine, or

satisfy Conscience. For my own part, I concur with the Generality of Protestant Christians, as to the Case under Debate. And that especially for these Reasons.

1. No Meat does in its own Nature defile, Matth. 15. 11. *Not that which goeth into the Mouth Defileth the man.* I suppose that the Apostle hath Respect unto those Words of our Saviour, when he says, *I know, and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing Unclean of it self.* Rom. 14. 14.

2. The Scriptures of the New-Testament give such a General Allowance for the Eating of all sorts of Meats, as doth Comprehend that of *Blood*. There is that Scripture, Rom. 14. 2. *One Believeth that he may Eat all things*; he that Believed so, was Orthodox in his Judgment as to that particular, And it was from *Weakness in Faith*, that is from Ignorance of the Latitude of Christian Liberty, under the Gospel, that any did Hesitate about it. Now if the Christian may Eat *All Things*, then *Blood*. Another Scripture is that in 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4. where the Apostle condemns the Superstition of those, *That Abstain from Meats, which God had created to be received with Thanksgiving of them, which Believe and Know the Truth, for every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be Received with Thanksgiving.* Now if *Nothing* is to be Refused, then *Blood* is not to be Refused. Another Scripture is that 1 Cor. 10. 25. *Whatsoever is Sold in the Shambles, that Eat, asking no Question for Conscience sake.* It was usual to Sell *Blood* in the Shambles, If therefore we may Eat not some Things only, but *whatever* is Sold in the Shambles, we may lawfully Eat *Blood*, for that is there Sold.

3. There are Medicinal Uses of Blood. Our

Modern Phyſicians have found, that the Spirit of Blood is a wonderful Reſtorative, may not a *Chriſtian* who is in a Conſumption make uſe of that Spirit for the Recovering of his Impaired Health, and Preſervation of his Life, according to the Sixth Commandment, only becauſe *Jews* were prohibited things made of Blood ?

4. If it be Lawful to Eat things Strangled, then it is Lawful to Eat Blood. The Conſequence is undeniable. And the Jews were as much bound in Conſcience to abſtain from things Strangled, as from Blood, and they Practiſe accordingly to this Day ; Some of the Popes have denied Chriſtians this Liberty. So did Pope *Zachary*, A D. *circiter.* 756 Alſo ſeveral Councils that were Convened in the Dayes of Popery, but *Auſtin* declares, that in his Time, if any man ſcrupled the Eating *things Strangled*, (which had the Blood in 'em) he was Laughed at by all the World v. *Auguſt* Lib. 32. *contra Fauſtum.* cap 13. If a man among us ſhould affirm that it is unlawful to Eat an Hare, or a Rabbet, killed by a ſtroke in the Neck, or a Pigeon caught in a Net, he would be Ridi'cled by moſt people. If the Eating of a *thing that dies of it ſelf*, is lawful, then to Eat things Strangled, or with the Blood in them, is ſo too ; but this is, and ever was Lawful for the Gentiles, Deut. 14 21. *Thou ſhalt not eat any thing that dyeth of it ſelf,, thou ſhalt give it to the Stranger, that he may eat it, or Sell it to an Alien.* Divines argue ſtrongly concerning *Uſury*, that the Prohibition of it to the Jews, was only a *Judiciai*, and not a *Moral* Precept, becauſe they might take Uſe for Mony Lett to Strangers. There is a Parity of Reaſon, as to this Caſe. He that Eats that which dies of it ſelf, eats Blood. This the Gentiles might do. Therefore Eating of Blood

was not againſt the Moral Law.

5. All Precepts which were only Ceremonial & not Moral, are Abrogated by the Death of Chriſt. Col. 2. 16, 17. Gal. 4. 9. Heb. 9. 10. ſuch was this concerning the not Eating of Blood, as appears from the Reaſon of the Prohibition mentioned, Lev. 17. 11. *For the Life of the Fleſh is in the Blood, and I have given it you upon the Altar to make an Atonement for your Souls, for it is the Blood that makes an Atonement.* Blood the Organ of Life, was Holy to God the Author of Life, & therefore they ſhould not Profane it by Eating thereof. Now this is a Ceremonial Reaſon, Blood was a Sacred Thing, becauſe to be offer'd to God for making Atonement, as Typical of the Blood of Chriſt. Wherefore ſince Chriſt has ſhed his Blood, there is no Sacredneſs in any other Blood.

The Hebrew Doctors object, that there were ſix Precepts given to *Adam*, and ſo to the *Antediluvians*, which were all of them Moral and Perpetual unto the Obſervation whereof all Mankind is obliged. And that a Seventh was added and given to *Noah*, *viz.* That Gen 9. 4. *The Fleſh with the Life thereof, which is the Blood thereof, thou ſhalt not Eat.*

For Anſwer. Not to Inſiſt upon the Falſeneſs of that *Rabbinical Notion* of Seven Precepts in the Moral Law, the Error whereof *Hulſius* has ſhewn in his *Nucleus Prophetiæ*.

1. Some of the *Jewiſh Maſters* themſelves confeſs, that the Precept which forbids Eating Blood, does concern only Iſraelites, and not other Nations. Rabbi *Solomon*, and ſome others of the Rabbins ſuppoſe that Text does only forbid the Eating of the Fleſh of Creatures, whilſt they are yet Living, and the Drinking of their Blood. This Interpretation is followed by *Cajetan*, *Mercer*, *Aynſworth*, the *Bel-*

gick *Annotators* & ſome others. It is an uſual Cuſtome among the Barbarous *Scythians* to drink the Blood of their Horſes. Alſo the *Arabians* will draw Blood from their Camels and Drink it. Mens being uſed to Blood makes them ferocious, and hard-hearted, as we ſee in Butchers, whence our Engliſh Laws permit not Butchers to be Jury-men in caſes of Life and Death. According to this Interpretation, the Deſign of that Precept to *Noah*, is to forbid all Inhumanity, which ſuits with the next verſe, containing a Prohibition of Murder. But

2 'Tis a miſtake to think, that all the Precepts given to *Noah*, were Moral, binding all his Poſterity in all the Ages of the World. For in his Dayes there was a Diſtinction made betwixt Clean and Unclean Beaſts. Gen. 7. 2. which was a Ceremonial, and not a Moral Commandment: And ſo was Sacrificing required of *Noah*, and of the Patriarchs before the Flood. And for that Reaſon it was not meet that they ſhould Eat Blood.

It is further Objected, That there was a *Synodical Decree* againſt the Eating Blood, in the Apoſtles Dayes, *viz.* that Acts 15 20. To which may be Anſwered, that the Apoſtolical Advice was grounded on the Scandal, which at that time, would have happened, in caſe the Converted Gentiles ſhould have practiſed the Eating of Blood, and that therefore it was only a *Temporary Advice*, & not a Precept binding all Chriſtians to the End of the World. *Ceſſatio Cauſæ efficit ut ceſſaret Obſervatio.* The Learned and Judicious *Turretin* does by divers Reaſons prove, that that Precept was not of perpetual Obſervation. He argueth, that *Paul* was preſent in the Synod at Jeruſalem, and knew the true Intendment of the Advice given; Nevertheleſs he afterwards wrote thoſe Epiſtles, in which he allows the

Eating of all sorts of meat, without any Limitation; which he would not have done, if the Decree, at Jerusalem had been of perpetual Observation. But in those Dayes the Eating of Blood would have scandaliz'd the Jews. That Practice was so abhorrent to them, as that it would have Endangered their being prejudiced against all Christianity, had they observed, that all Christians indulged themselves therein; on which account, to abstain from it was then *necessary*, verse 29. It would also have been Scandalous to the Gentiles among whom the Eating of Blood was an Idolatrous Rite. Psal. 16.4. The *Syrians* used to drink some of the Blood of their Sacrifices. The Book of *Wisdom* informs us, that the old Canaanites had Blood in their Feasts. And *Lactantius* testifies, that the Heathen at the Feast of *Bacchus* were wont to Drink Goats Blood; they would also Boil Blood, & mix it with Meat & Spices, & so Eat it at their Sacrifices, which *Tertullian* calls *Botulos Cruore distentos*; they Sacrificed *Sawsages & black puddings* to Idols. *Maimonides* says, that the Reason, why the Heathen did Eat Blood, was, because they thought that Blood was the Food of *Dæmons*, whom they Worshipped, & that thereby they should obtain their Love & Favour. To the same purpose does *Origen* speak. Hence the *Dæmons* are by *Athenagoras* called *HAIMA PERILICHMOMENOI, Lickers of Blood*; so then in Primitive Times Eating of Blood would have Looked like a Symbolizing with the Heathen, & was for that Cause then Inhibited. And although it is mentioned with *Fornication*, it does not follow that if one of these is against the Moral Law, that the other is so too; For the *Eating of things offered to Idols* is also mentioned, *Acts* 21.25. But that is an Indifferent thing, the Apostle does plainly allow of it, when it can be done without Scandal, 1 *Cor.* 10.27. He only therefore condemns the Eating of *Idolothytes*, in the Idols Temples, 1 *Cor.* 8.10. But

does

does not forbid them to do it, in their own Houſes, becauſe in the one place it might be without Scandal, but not in the other. There is then no Validity in the Objection. *Eating of Blood & Fornication* are conjunctly mentioned, therefore they are of the ſame Nature. We find in other Scriptures that Precepts, which are only *Judicial*, are conjunctly mentioned with thoſe that are *Moral*. Thus in *Ezek.* 18. The taking of a *Pledge*, & *Uſury*, Judicial Precepts, are condemned with *Idolatry* & *Adultery*, hainous Tranſgreſſions of the Moral Law, unlawful to be done by any perſons, in any place, or at any time. Moreover, the Gentiles eſteemed *Fornication* to be no ſin at all, yea, the Unclean Spirit unto whom they Sacrificed, taught them to make it a part of their Idolatrous Worſhip; Witneſs that ſhameful thing *Baal peor*, *Numb.* 23. 3. *Jer.* 11. 13. *Hoſ.* 9. 10. *Rev.* 2 14. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves that the Hebrews were wont to Condemn all *Inceſtuous Marriages* by the Name of *Fornication*, which the Gentiles made no matter about, & therefore ſuppoſeth that the Deſign of the Apoſtles in Condemning *Fornication* with things offered to Idols & Blood, was to bring the Converted Gentiles under the Obedience of the Law, in Lev. 18. Another late *Annotator* conceives, that the Thing more eſpecially Deſigned, is to forbid that *Concubinate*, which was commonly practiſed both by Jews and Gentiles, the Evil whereof was not generally known, until diſcovered by the Light of the Goſpel. Theſe four things, *Idolothytes*, *Fornication*, *Strangled and Blood* were the Rites of Idolatry commonly practiſed amongſt the Nations, ſo that the Gentiles by abſtaining from them, declared a perfect Renunciation of their Heatheniſm, which Dr *Spencer* in his late Learned Exercitations, takes to be the ſpecial Reaſon why thoſe four particulars are by the Apoſtles inſtanced in.

Theſe things ſeem a Satisfactory Solution of the weightieſt Arguments, which have been produced for the Negative, in the Queſtion before us.

FINIS.

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